

BAKED STUFFED APPLES

A savory twist on traditional baked apples

Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski adapted a recipe by Clair Gallam, SheKnows.com

Featured Food: Apples

Yield: Serves 4

Ingredients

4 red apples, Gala or Fuji if available	2 T. white wine
Juice from ½ a lemon	1 T. heavy cream
4 slices of bacon	6 oz. soft goat cheese
2 leeks, white parts only, washed and sliced	2 T. toasted pecans
2 cloves garlic, minced	Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Working from the stem end, use a melon baller to remove the core from each apple, scooping out the stem and seeds and making a deep hole for the filling; work to within about 1/2 inch of the bottom of the apple. Peel the skin from the top half of each apple. Sprinkle each apple with lemon juice to prevent early browning. Prepare a square or round baking dish by lightly coating it with cooking spray. Place apples in the dish.

Cut the bacon into 1" strips. Cook in a sauté pan over medium high heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan and set aside. Add leeks to rendered fat and cook 2-3 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute. Deglaze pan with white wine then add cream and simmer until liquid has mostly evaporated, about two minutes.

Remove pan from heat and stir in goat cheese until blended. Fold bacon and pecans into the mixture. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.

Scoop about one to two tablespoons of cheese mixture into each apple. Bake in preheated oven for 25 - 30 minutes, until apples are soft and cheese is bubbly.

Adapted from a [She Knows](http://SheKnows.com) recipe by Clair Gallam. Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski, Executive Chef for MSU Culinary Services, used the rendered bacon fat to gently cook mild-flavored leeks then folded in toasted pecans and crispy bacon to make this savory twist on baked apples a truly memorable dish.